

**From:** Praising Jesus  
**To:** Microsoft ATR  
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**Subject:** Microsoft Case

I am the pawn in all this litigation. I am the consumer. I continue to read about the "harm" Microsoft has done to me and how the damage should be mitigated. Poppycock! Microsoft has only helped me. I have bought almost every product they make from a Systems or Office perspective. When MS-DOS came out, it was fashioned after some very arcane programming principles which made it difficult to use (CP/M). Microsoft heard our cry and MS-DOS was continually improved by adding features like a text editor, a file manager, etc., etc. many things that were being charged hundreds of dollars for, Microsoft incorporated in their next version of the Operating System to make my life easier, cheaper, faster and make computing more accessible to the lay person. When it was clear that Apple had a good idea with Graphical Interfaces, Windows was born. Again, missing almost everything I needed to work with it. Aftermarket products were offered at hundreds and thousands of dollars by all the companies out there. So bad was the bilking of the public, the shareware market was born to save us from software authors. Microsoft, however, continued to hear our pleas and made their software cheaper, easier and more feature-filled than their opposition. Most of the add-ons were inferior, by design, to allow the after-market to prosper - which it did and still does. However, Microsoft continued to supply the things most users were interested in. Games, system management tools, elementary word processors, network connections - they gave users what they wanted to keep software people from bilking them for non-descript add-ons.

During this period, you couldn't even share a word processing document with a friend. Every piece of software was unique and did not meet any standard format. I once had to purchase Word, Word Perfect, Amipro, Lotus 1-2-3, Excel, QuatroPro, Visicalc, Powerpoint, Harvard Graphics, Coreldraw, dBase, Access, Foxpro, Procomm, and a host of smaller programs just to communicate with my employees who were bringing things from home. It was an impossible situation. Microsoft resolved this for me by creating an Office Suite and pricing it reasonably enough that people could buy it for use. Their competitors refused to lower prices and eventually went out of business.

Finally, Microsoft has only ever had two actual operating systems, MS-DOS and Windows NT. Every version of Windows (3.0, 3.11, Win95, Win98, Win98SE, and Millennium Edition) are all just a graphical user interface built on top of MS-DOS. You can try it yourself, each version can be simply booted as MS-DOS. At the familiar > prompt, simply type WIN to run the interface. Now a case can be made that each iteration was merely an upgrade to the original MS-DOS system. Each upgrade added so many features, the price increased accordingly. You could say that Microsoft built their base by allowing users to incrementally fund their upgrades to an operating system they purchased long ago. However you frame it, Microsoft gave users what they wanted and needed. Their competitors did not. I bought my first copy of Microsoft

Office for less than I paid for my first copy of WordPerfect.

The real bottom line is this - the only thing that will damage me is these states winning this lawsuit and causing me irreparable harm and expense by reverting back a system which blatantly exploited users while there was no competition (\$700 and \$800 word processors, \$900 spreadsheets, etc.). Microsoft made competition, Microsoft made a superior product, Microsoft standardized the software industry and made personal computing possible, and now we want to punish them for it.

This lawsuit is clearly an attack by their competitors attempting to find a way to exploit the consumer through protectionism and forcing competition to go away. I object to the terms of the settlement. While Microsoft has made some poor decisions, the very people suing them have made very similar decisions. It is the height of hypocrisy to charge that Microsoft was so much *\*MORE\** egregious that they deserve punishment. I frankly don't even think we need a settlement, Microsoft should be allowed to continue their business as they have and let other companies get competitive or get out. However, since they have acted a bit too arrogantly and have coerced some suppliers to go along with their business practices, then settle this by making them stop doing it. They don't need any great penalties since they really haven't done anything that wouldn't have happened anyway. I even question that they are a monopoly. I can buy at least five different operating systems now. I can buy dozens of office applications now. While they have the overwhelming market share, how can they be considered a monopoly when there are still such a large number of users and competitors who do not use their product? My current employer adopted their product not because of coercion, not because of superiority. Just like the war between Beta and VHS in the video industry, just like the war between cassette and 8-track in the audio industry, my employer chose Microsoft because standardization was essential and Microsoft made the most logical product at the time that decision was made. Once that decision was made, changing horses in the middle of the stream became an unsound economic decision.

Microsoft got where they are because they offered the "best value" at the time a decision was made. Once the decision was made, they won the war. It doesn't make sense to switch to other products. Artificially forcing the consumers and businesses to spend billions, perhaps even trillions of dollars to retrain people on inferior products, inflated in price from protectionism and throwing standardization out the window is ludicrous - particularly in the name of "protecting" those same people.

My opinion, drop this ridiculous suit and tell the states, and their politicians, to go garner votes some other way than at my expense. If I am forced to buy a "stripped down" version of Windows and pay for common options that were part of my operating system, I should have the right to start my own suit for the damages caused me.

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